

# **The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015**

## **Background and Key Details**

*Background:* Beginning in 2010, Congress overwhelmingly passed a series of strong sanctions that helped crush the Iranian economy and eventually brought Iran to the negotiating table. Included in those statutory sanctions are various national security waivers and other provisions that the president intends to use to suspend sanctions on Iran as part of any final nuclear deal.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (Public Law 114-17) prevents the president from waiving or suspending those sanctions before Congress has the chance to vote on an agreement, if one is reached, and allows Congress to permanently remove these authorities if it disapproves of the deal over a presidential veto.

Without this law there would have been no limitation on the president's use of waivers to suspend the sanctions Congress put in place; no requirement that Congress receive full details of any agreement with Iran; no review period for Congress to examine and weigh in on an agreement; no requirement that the president regularly certify Iran is complying; and no way for Congress to rapidly reimpose sanctions should Iran cheat.

### *Key Provisions:*

1. The law requires the president to submit to Congress the agreement and all related documents, including specifics on verification and compliance. This ensures Congress will get to see the entire deal and make an independent judgment on its merits.
2. The law prohibits the president from waiving statutory sanctions while Congress reviews the agreement. If the agreement and all related documents are submitted by July 9, Congress has up to 52 days to review the deal and may vote on the agreement in the first 30 days; the president then has 12 days to veto the bill, followed by 10 days for Congress to override such a veto. If the deal is submitted in the lead up to or during the August recess (from July 10 to September 7) Congress has an additional 30 days of review for a total of up to 82 days.
3. The law gives Congress the opportunity to enact a joint resolution of disapproval that would permanently prevent the president from waiving or suspending the congressional sanctions. The law enhances Congress's authority over statutory sanctions, and goes further by explicitly making clear it does not revoke or permanently lift sanctions, which requires a separate vote.
4. The law holds Iran accountable by requiring the president to certify to Congress every 90 days that Iran is complying with the agreement. If Iran violates the terms of the deal, the law provides an expedited process for Congress to rapidly restore its sanctions.
5. The law also includes unprecedented reporting requirements on Iran's direct and indirect support for terrorism, human rights violations, and ballistic missile testing.

*Congressional Action:* The bill passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously and passed the full Senate 98 to 1 and the House of Representatives 400 to 25.